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Use of Compressed Air
for Pumping Water

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THE USE OF COMPRESSED AIR FOR PUMPING WATER

...BY...

GEORGE RUSSELL SMITH

THESIS

FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING


IN THE

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

George Russell Smith

ENTITLED The Use of Compressed Air for Pumping Water

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

L. P. Brickemidge

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF Mechanical Engineering.

Table of Contents.

Page.

HISTORICAL-----	1-21
Frizell patent,-----	2
Siemens patent,-----	3
Pohle and Hill patents,-----	4
Plate 1, Pohle and Hill pump,-----	6
Plate 2, " " " " ,-----	7
Plate 3, Pohle pump,-----	8
Plate 4, Three methods of well piping,-----	9
Kennedy patent,-----	10
Plate 5, Kennedy nozzle,-----	11
Saunders patent,-----	12
Plate 6, Saunders well piping,-----	13
Haas patent,-----	14
Bickel patent,-----	14
Titus patent,-----	14
Harris patent,-----	15
Plate 7, Harris pump,-----	17
Merrill patent,-----	18
Plate 8, Merrill pumps,-----	19
Elliot patent,-----	20
Plate 9, Elliot pump,-----	21
TESTS OF COMPRESSING AIR BY FALLING WATER AND RAISING	
WATER BY COMPRESSED AIR,-----	22-44
AIR COMPRESSING BY FALLING WATER, J. P. Frizell,-----	22-28
Plate 10, Frizell apparatus for air compressing,-----	23
Table 1, Results of experiments in air compressing,---	26
Table 2, Comparison of observed and computed losses	
of head,-----	27

1	Introduction
2	Chapter 1: The History of the Book
3	Chapter 2: The Structure of the Book
4	Chapter 3: The Language of the Book
5	Chapter 4: The Style of the Book
6	Chapter 5: The Content of the Book
7	Chapter 6: The Audience of the Book
8	Chapter 7: The Purpose of the Book
9	Chapter 8: The Value of the Book
10	Chapter 9: The Future of the Book
11	Chapter 10: The Conclusion of the Book
12	Appendix A: The Glossary of the Book
13	Appendix B: The Index of the Book
14	Appendix C: The Bibliography of the Book
15	Appendix D: The List of Figures of the Book
16	Appendix E: The List of Tables of the Book
17	Appendix F: The List of Appendices of the Book
18	Appendix G: The List of References of the Book
19	Appendix H: The List of Notes of the Book
20	Appendix I: The List of Footnotes of the Book
21	Appendix J: The List of Endnotes of the Book
22	Appendix K: The List of References of the Book
23	Appendix L: The List of Notes of the Book
24	Appendix M: The List of Footnotes of the Book
25	Appendix N: The List of Endnotes of the Book
26	Appendix O: The List of References of the Book
27	Appendix P: The List of Notes of the Book
28	Appendix Q: The List of Footnotes of the Book
29	Appendix R: The List of Endnotes of the Book
30	Appendix S: The List of References of the Book
31	Appendix T: The List of Notes of the Book
32	Appendix U: The List of Footnotes of the Book
33	Appendix V: The List of Endnotes of the Book
34	Appendix W: The List of References of the Book
35	Appendix X: The List of Notes of the Book
36	Appendix Y: The List of Footnotes of the Book
37	Appendix Z: The List of Endnotes of the Book
38	Appendix AA: The List of References of the Book
39	Appendix AB: The List of Notes of the Book
40	Appendix AC: The List of Footnotes of the Book
41	Appendix AD: The List of Endnotes of the Book
42	Appendix AE: The List of References of the Book
43	Appendix AF: The List of Notes of the Book
44	Appendix AG: The List of Footnotes of the Book
45	Appendix AH: The List of Endnotes of the Book
46	Appendix AI: The List of References of the Book
47	Appendix AJ: The List of Notes of the Book
48	Appendix AK: The List of Footnotes of the Book
49	Appendix AL: The List of Endnotes of the Book
50	Appendix AM: The List of References of the Book
51	Appendix AN: The List of Notes of the Book
52	Appendix AO: The List of Footnotes of the Book
53	Appendix AP: The List of Endnotes of the Book
54	Appendix AQ: The List of References of the Book
55	Appendix AR: The List of Notes of the Book
56	Appendix AS: The List of Footnotes of the Book
57	Appendix AT: The List of Endnotes of the Book
58	Appendix AU: The List of References of the Book
59	Appendix AV: The List of Notes of the Book
60	Appendix AW: The List of Footnotes of the Book
61	Appendix AX: The List of Endnotes of the Book
62	Appendix AY: The List of References of the Book
63	Appendix AZ: The List of Notes of the Book
64	Appendix BA: The List of Footnotes of the Book
65	Appendix BB: The List of Endnotes of the Book
66	Appendix BC: The List of References of the Book
67	Appendix BD: The List of Notes of the Book
68	Appendix BE: The List of Footnotes of the Book
69	Appendix BF: The List of Endnotes of the Book
70	Appendix BG: The List of References of the Book
71	Appendix BH: The List of Notes of the Book
72	Appendix BI: The List of Footnotes of the Book
73	Appendix BJ: The List of Endnotes of the Book
74	Appendix BK: The List of References of the Book
75	Appendix BL: The List of Notes of the Book
76	Appendix BM: The List of Footnotes of the Book
77	Appendix BN: The List of Endnotes of the Book
78	Appendix BO: The List of References of the Book
79	Appendix BP: The List of Notes of the Book
80	Appendix BQ: The List of Footnotes of the Book
81	Appendix BR: The List of Endnotes of the Book
82	Appendix BS: The List of References of the Book
83	Appendix BT: The List of Notes of the Book
84	Appendix BU: The List of Footnotes of the Book
85	Appendix BV: The List of Endnotes of the Book
86	Appendix BW: The List of References of the Book
87	Appendix BX: The List of Notes of the Book
88	Appendix BY: The List of Footnotes of the Book
89	Appendix BZ: The List of Endnotes of the Book
90	Appendix CA: The List of References of the Book
91	Appendix CB: The List of Notes of the Book
92	Appendix CC: The List of Footnotes of the Book
93	Appendix CD: The List of Endnotes of the Book
94	Appendix CE: The List of References of the Book
95	Appendix CF: The List of Notes of the Book
96	Appendix CG: The List of Footnotes of the Book
97	Appendix CH: The List of Endnotes of the Book
98	Appendix CI: The List of References of the Book
99	Appendix CJ: The List of Notes of the Book
100	Appendix CK: The List of Footnotes of the Book



The principle of raising a column of water by the direct pressure of compressed air has been known since the sixteenth century, but the practical application of it has been made within quite recent years. In the use of air for water elevating two general methods have been employed. In one, water and air are admitted directly, to a chamber, which is provided with suitable valves and openings, and the air is blown into the water, thus forcing the water up the riser and thus elevating the water.

An Austrian paper, the "Oesterreichische Zeitung", of December 4th. 1886 stated that the air system of water elevating was known and used in the sixteenth century. In the "Zeitschrift des Vereins Deutscher Ingenieure" of November 16th. 1885 Verlock stated that this system of water elevating was described in 1797 by Emanuel Löscher, a mining engineer, of Freiberg, as an "aerostatic drainage apparatus, by means of which water can be raised several fathoms without any buckets or pumps". The experiments of Löscher were made by sub-merging a rising pipe for part of its length, in the water, in a tank and then blowing compressed air through a small tube into the sub-merged opening of the first pipe. The bubbles of air became mixed with the water, in the rising main and diminished its specific gravity so that the mixture of water and air was driven high above the water level in the tank by the hydrostatic pressure, and, under certain conditions was made to flow out from the riser. In 1846 an American, James B. Smith, made use of this same principle in raising

water from drilled wells in Pennsylvania.

The first United States patent granted for an air lift was number 212,182 dated October 9th, 1880 and issued to Mr. Joseph F. Frizell, Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, for a "Method of Raising Water". Mr. Frizell has previously worked out a method of air compressing, by using a vertical column of water.

A patent was granted to him for this on June 29th, 1878. The method employed for the air compressing will be more fully described later.

The patent for a method of raising water by means of compressed air is usually called that of using water for compressing air.

The claim allowed on the Frizell patent of 1880 was as follows: "In the art of elevating water the method of causing a column of water to ascend in a conductor by the weight of the external water, which consists in introducing a tube of the desired length to the required depth into the water to be elevated, and then introducing compressed air in the form of minute bubbles into the water at the lower end of said tube, thereby raising the water so that a continuous stream is caused to flow upward to the point of discharge substantially as described."

Practically the same invention as that of Mr. Frizell was made, and was patented by Mr. J. H. Harris, of the Missouri School of Mines. While sinking the piers for the foundation of a bridge over the Arkansas river, near Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Prof. Harris made use of compressed air for pumping out the water and sand. A 3 inch pipe 20 feet long was set vertically, with its upper end about 4 feet above the surface of the water and the lower end resting on the sand bottom at a depth

about 4 feet. About 4 inches above the lower end of the large pipe a hole was cut and a 1 inch pipe was screwed into the large pipe at right angles to it. Into this small pipe air was forced by means of the ordinary pump and hose connections used for supplying the air to the divers' helmet. An abundant discharge was obtained, from the top of the large pipe, which was estimated by Mr. Harris to contain about equal parts of sand and water. A patent was applied for by Mr. Harris and was first refused by the Patent Office on the ground that Mr. Fairall's application had been first presented, but the final rejection was based upon the prior patent, already referred to and also the patent of Captain J. J. ... number 221,415, the last two being for hydraulic excavators.

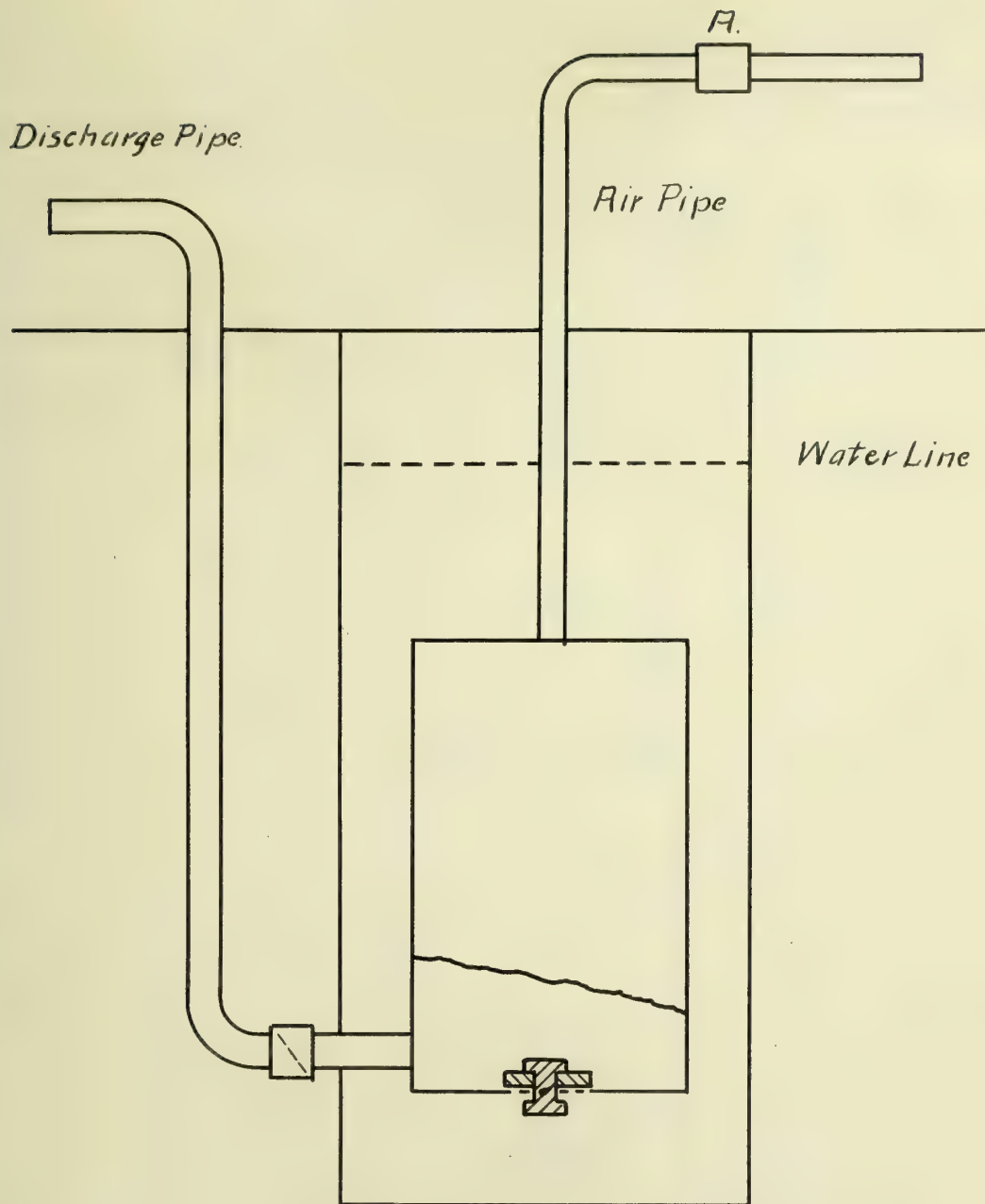
A similar invention was made by Dr. Siemens, - see abstract in the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, volume 81, page 400, 1885 taken from "Deutsches Polytechnische Journal" volume 11, page 284. In a coal shaft being sunk near Berlin, 30 meters of bearing sand had to be gone through. The shaft became filled. It was attempted at first to relieve the pressure on the shaft by making numerous Abyssinian wells in the surrounding waste, but these owing to their small size did not permit of the ... of Dr. Siemens, of imitating the action of gas springs, geysers, and petroleum wells, in nature. His plan was to convey compressed air to the bottom of the suction pipe and there allow it to escape through the mass of water, where by its expansive action a lifting force would be exerted, until an equilibrium ... pressure was obtained. The experiment was made

the Abyssinian tube well, that had been for some time in use, was 20 millimeters, depth 30 meters and it had a suction pipe 3 meters long. The tube was lengthened 9 meters at the top and a lead pipe 20 millimeters in diameter, terminating in a copper wind-bore with numerous small holes was put down to the bottom. This was connected with an air compressor, which was worked by reversing the action of a portable steam engine. Reversing the action of the lift Dr. Siemens says: "As soon as the pressure in the air vessel rose to three atmospheres, a current was established, the air escaped from the bottom of the suction pipe into the water in the well tube and rose slowly in numerous small bubbles. As each bubble exerted a pressure on the water surrounding it equivalent to that of the water it displaced, the equilibrium was maintained and the water rose in the discharge pipe, overflowing it if the water was not too high. The velocity of the water which is constant so long as the air pressure is kept up, depends upon the quantity of air supplied per unit of time, and the frictional resistance in the tube and discharge pipe."

This method was first used in France for raising mineral water by means of it, the apparatus being known as "em-

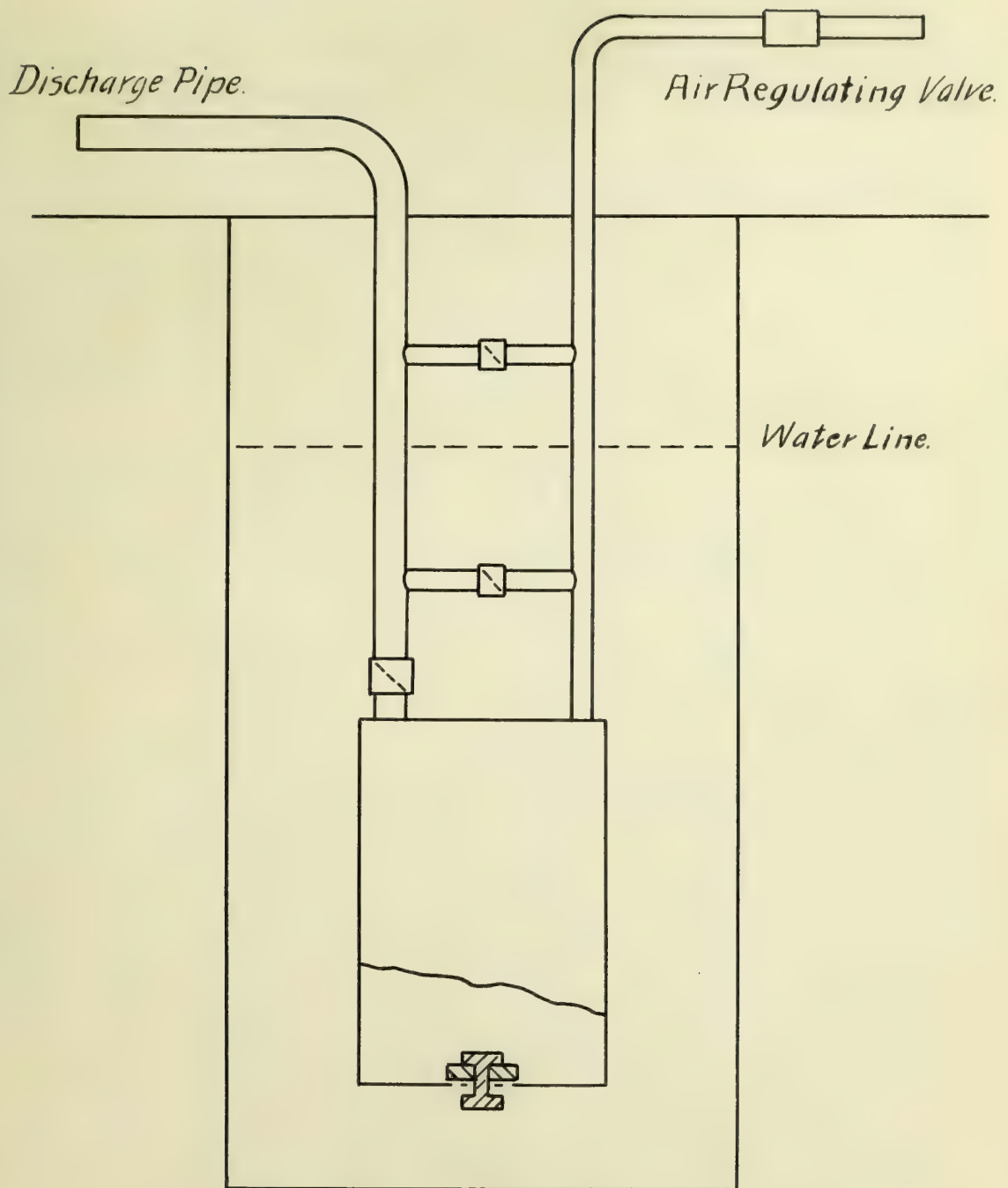
the inventor who has been wont to bring the air lift pump into practical use is Dr. Julius G. Pohl. While manager of some Colorado mines Dr. Pohl discovered that in the operation of an old pneumatic pump, an advantage was gained by introducing compressed air into the discharge pipe. A patent number 334,295 was granted March 23rd, 1886 to Messrs. Pohl and Hill for a form

... alternate acting compression and lift, it varies a chamber is filled alternately with compressed air and the water or liquid to be elevated, the air being forced in by the pump. To ascend the discharge pipe and then deliver it above the water level. Plate 1 shows the arrangement of the pump. The valve at A comprises part of the patent. The valve is a five-ported valve in its action, controlling the admission and escape of the air. In a second patent number 247,240 issued to the inventor August 10th, 1886. There was made, in combination with the above device, a horizontal cylinder, entering the pipe at B, at a point of its height, would ascend in bubbles through the rising liquid. Plate 2 shows the arrangement of the pump. The main of this patent covers the combination of the ordinary replacement pump and the air lift principle. The additional air is in elevating the water after it has left the pump. On December 6th, 1892 a patent number 487,534 was issued to Dr. John C. ... of "Elevating Liquids". The arrangement of the apparatus is shown on plate 3. In it the air is introduced at the lower end of a vertical pipe. The quantity is sufficient to form bubbles which rise and expand, immediately, across the pipe and fill the space from side to side. When the lift is started the air pressure, slightly greater than that corresponding to the weight of a column of liquid, extending from the point of entrance of the gaseous fluid, to the level of the liquid surrounding the pipe, is required. Since the specific gravity of a mixture of air and liquid is less than that of the liquid alone, after the lift has started it requires a less air pressure than that required to start it. To keep it in operation. When the lift is in full



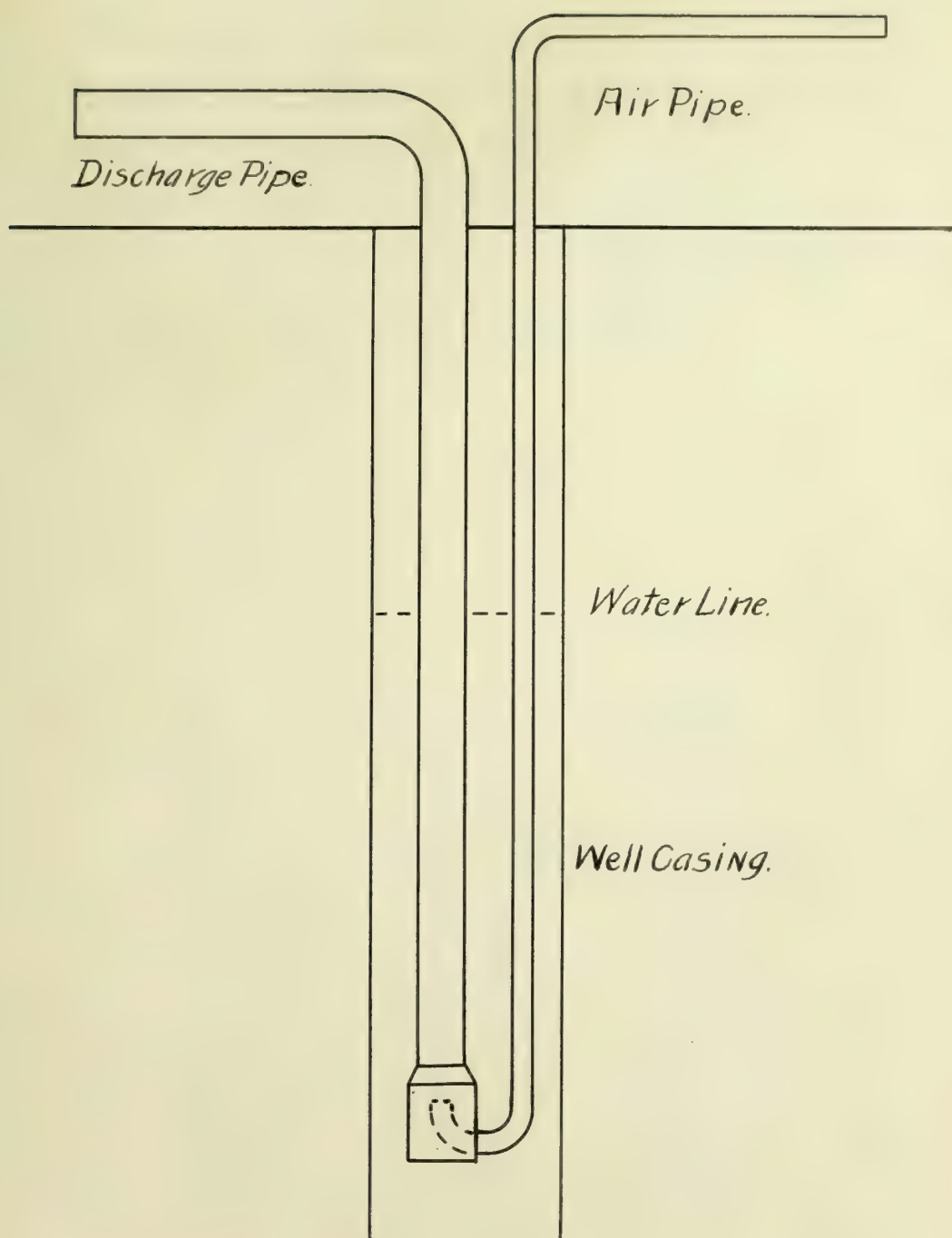
Pohlé Patent Number 338295.

Plate 1.



Pohle and Hill Patent, Number 347,196.

Plate 2.

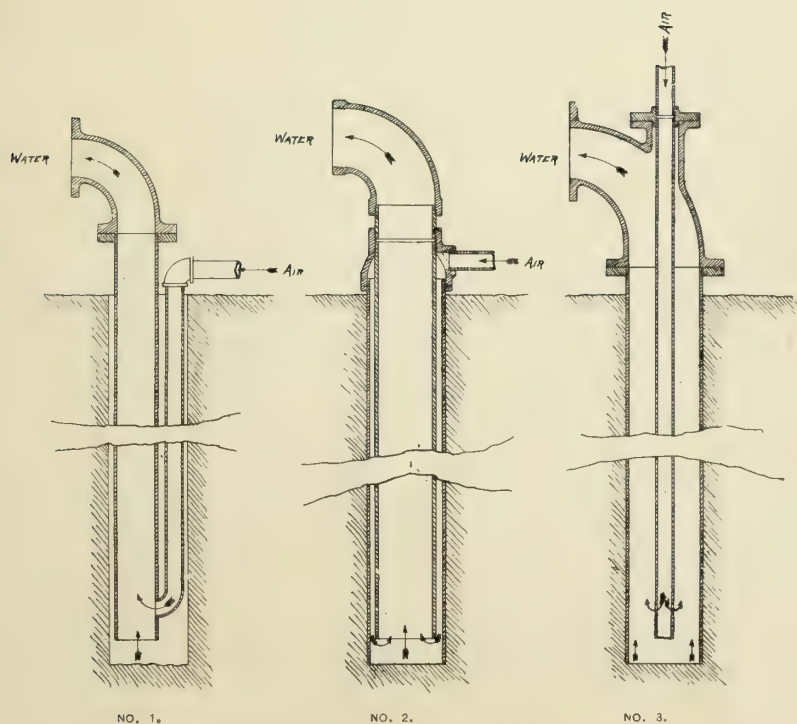


Pohlé Patent, Number 487,639.

Plate 3.

5,

The first method of well piping is shown in Fig. 1. It consists of a vertical pipe with a water seal at the top. The water seal is formed by a U-shaped pipe that dips into the well water. Air is introduced into the well through a side pipe. The second method, shown in Fig. 2, is similar to the first, but the air is introduced through a different arrangement. The third method, shown in Fig. 3, is a more complex system involving multiple pipes and seals.



THREE METHODS OF WELL PIPING.

1
The J. Edgar Hoover Building, Washington, D. C., dated May 1, 1943
Patent, number 538,445 for an "Apparatus for lifting and
moving material". Claim number four of the said patent reads: "A col-
lar for use in liquid lifting and feeding systems comprising
a cylindrical body having a series of grooves forming a series of
collars, each collar provided with an upper face which is
inclined with respect to the longitudinal axis of the nozzle and
with a lower neutral face of greater inclination than the upper
face, and a series of discharge ports extending through said
collars in lines substantially at right angles to the inclined
upper working faces thereof; the lower neutral face of
each collar being disposed within the lines of the jets or sprays,
the lower face of the next adjacent collar, substantially as and
for the purposes described."

A drawing of the nozzle is given on Plate 5. It will be noticed
therein that the inclination of the lower face with the longitu-
dinal axis is greater than that of the upper face, that the
collars are slightly tapered and that the openings are at right
angles to the upper face of the collars, all of these facts being
chosen, by the designer to be of an especial advantage.

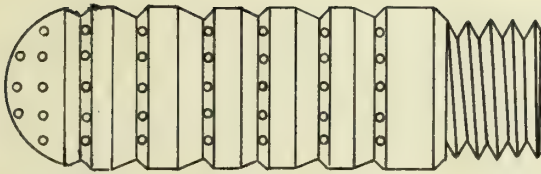
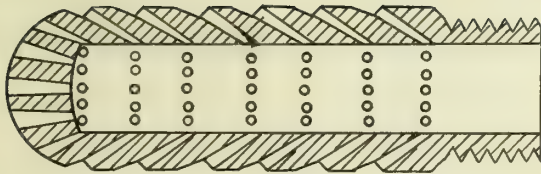


Figure 4.

Kennedy Nozzle.

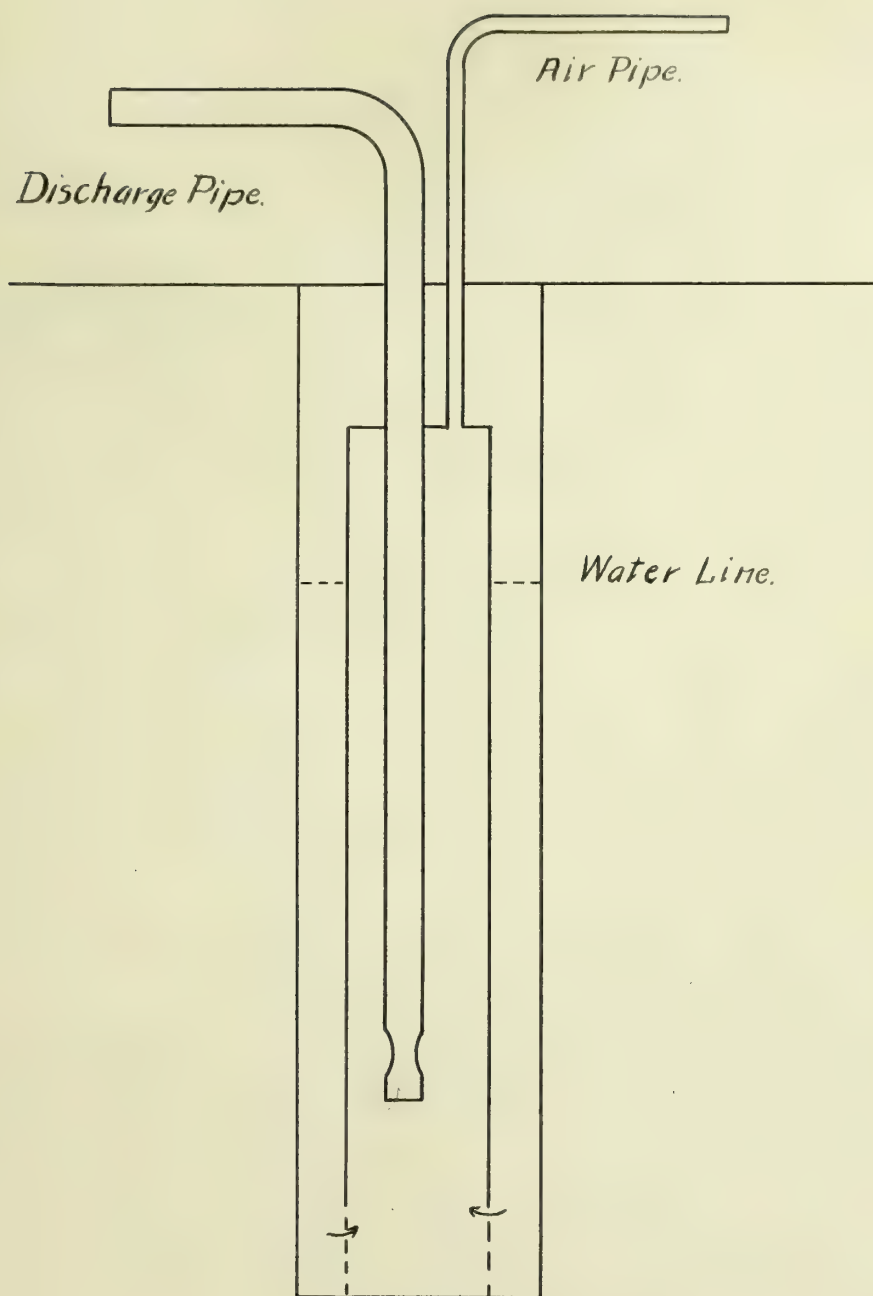
Patent Number 568,445.

Plate 5.

W. J. Gardner of North Plainfield, N.J. was issued in 1914 patent number 1,292,727 for an "Air Lift Pump". The claims, taken from the patent record, which are given, together with Figure 1 fully describe the invention.

1.- The herein described method of pumping which consists in applying, directly to the open lower end of a valveless delivery pipe surrounded by an open bottom chamber continuously supplied with gas under pressure, of charges of the liquid and of under pressure and in alternation.

claim 2.- In an air lift pump the combination of a stationary delivery pipe formed with a contracted portion nearer its lower extremity, a pressure chamber surrounding said pipe, said chamber being open at its lower end to receive the water, and valveless connections between the pressure chamber and an independent source of compressed air at one end, and with the water at the other end, whereby the level of the liquid in the chamber and the pressure of the air from the tank will always operate to cause the liquid to rise, causing the liquid to rise above the lower end of the delivery pipe, and water escape therefrom in alternation.



Saunders Patent, Number 597,023.

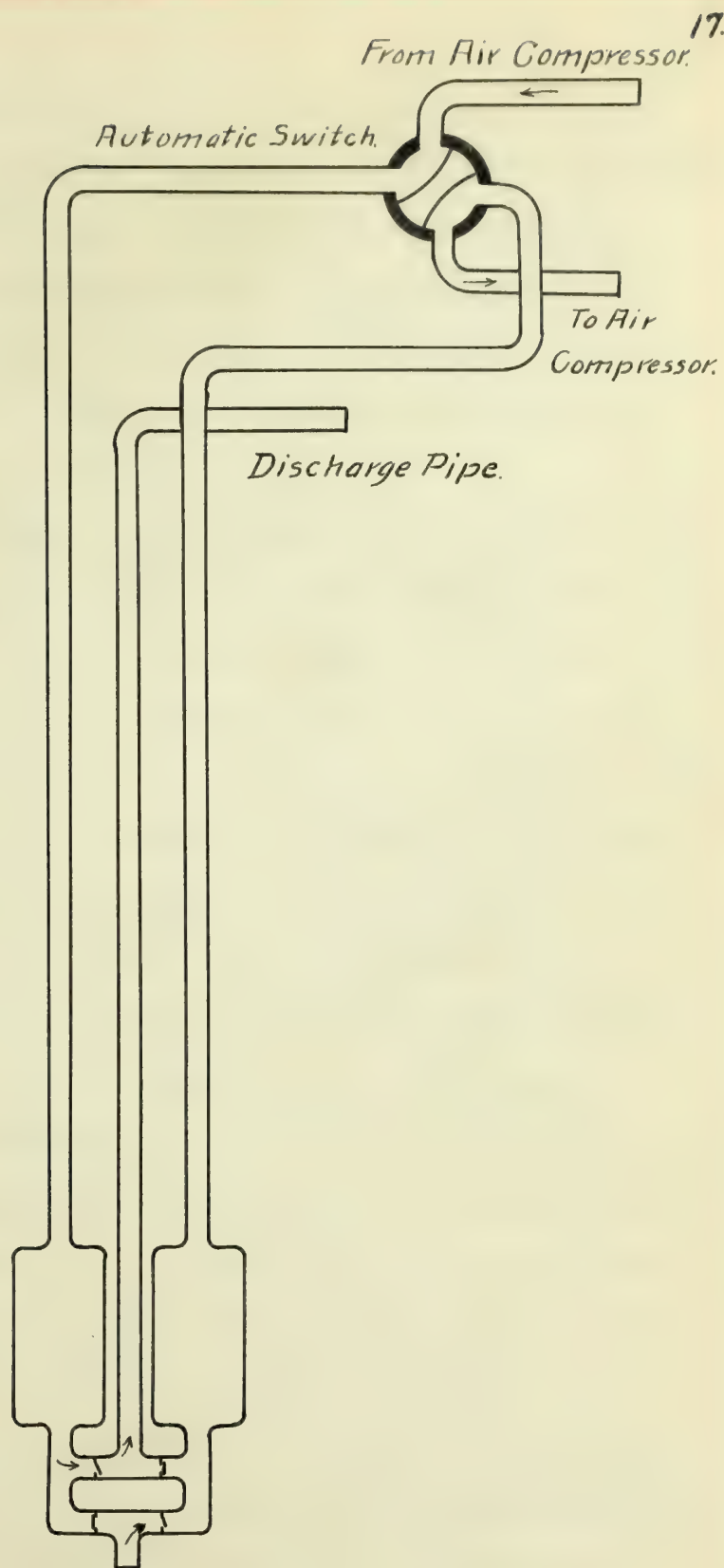
Plate 6.

of several different points throughout its run, it may be injected into the suction tube at different points, also a series of cut-offs or valves adapted to open and close the pipes at one or more of the different points and a means for operating the cut-offs or valves.

Professor Wm. H. Harris, who has been mentioned for his work in connection with the air lift, has patented a patent, number 1,337, on April 13th. 1897 for a pump. Claim number four of the application for a patent reads as follows: "A pump, consisting of two vessels each having at its bottom a pipe connection for admitting and discharging water, and each having at its top a pipe connection for admitting and discharging air; a switch connecting the air-pipes of said vessel with the other pipes leading to the inlet and discharge, respectively, of an air-compressor, said switch being adapted to reverse the connections of said air-pipes with said pipes leading to the inlet and discharge of an air-compressor, and an engine for automatically operating said switch through the medium of atmospheric pressure in conjunction with a partial vacuum created in the intake pipe of the compressor, said engine, comprising a cylinder, piston and piston-rod, a valve arranged to admit free air to propel the piston and to allow the operating air to escape into the intake pipe of the compressor, said valve being operated by a rod connected at one end to the said piston-rod and at the other end to a valve arranged to operate the valve; and an adjustable weight mounted between the vertical guides above said piston-rod and connected thereto by a link which in its extreme positions is inclined so that said weight and horizontal link will pull down on the piston-rod of the cylinder

mechanically as described".

While it does not give a drawing of the actual working pump, serves to show the relative position of the different parts. Professor Lippie refers to the unit as a compressed-air-pressure pump, because the liquid first flows in closed receptacle and is then driven out and raised by the action of compressed-air. The unit has no floats or air-valves of the engine room and no air is allowed to escape as the water from the tanks returns to the compressor, and the surrounding pressure is the same as the air in the pump. The important feature is an automatic switch which turns the air from the "suction" tank to the other, and at the same time turns the exhaust air back to the compressor. The switch can be operated by means of the partial vacuum, in the inlet pipe to the compressor, produced, when the water in either tank is drawn above its normal level, or by a pneumatic mechanism operated by a pressure gauge on the inlet to the compressor, or a float in one of the tanks or a mechanical device which throws the switch after a fixed number of strokes of the piston. The designer computed the loss of power in the working of the pump to be 15.4 per cent. This includes the loss due to friction in both air and water pipes, and to the drop in pressure after the switching, but not including the loss in the compressor. The basis, on which this estimate was made, was on a pump to raise 1000 gallons per minute through a vertical height of 100 feet, the length of both air pipes and of the water pipe being 100 feet.



Harris Displacement Pump.

Mr. Merrill of Plainfield, N.J. is the inventor of a form of automatic air valve. In his design, the air valve is controllably located within the pump chamber. The air valve may be located either inside or outside of the pump chamber. The use of valves is objectionable on account of their weight, the injury that is caused by the action of sand or gritty water, and the interference with the working parts.

On June 30th, 1908 Mr. Merrill was granted a patent, number 871,171, for an automatic air valve to be used on those displacement pumps. The valve is entirely self-contained. It consists of a main air valve controlled by an auxiliary valve, both of which are actuated by a differential piston, on which the air pressure is applied. This means the valve action is prevented from rising or falling in position. The movement of the air valve is predetermined and adjusted to the maximum filling capacity of the water chamber, which is so constructed as to exceed the discharge capacity thereby insuring complete filling of the chamber.

Figure 1, plate 2 is a sectional view through the chamber of a displacement pump of the improved type, showing the admission and discharge valves, and the absence of all other moving parts below the water level. Figure 2 on the same plate is an external view of the pump.

The automatic air valve may be placed just above the water level or any distance away from the water chamber. It is preferable however to place the air valve near the water level, to avoid the necessity of required to fill the connecting air pipes above. When the pump is in operation the velocity of influx

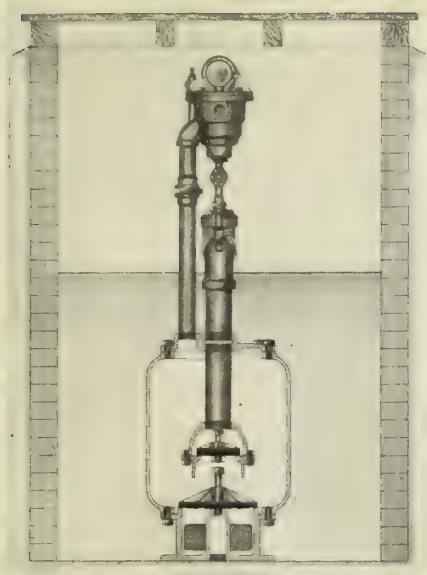


Figure 1.

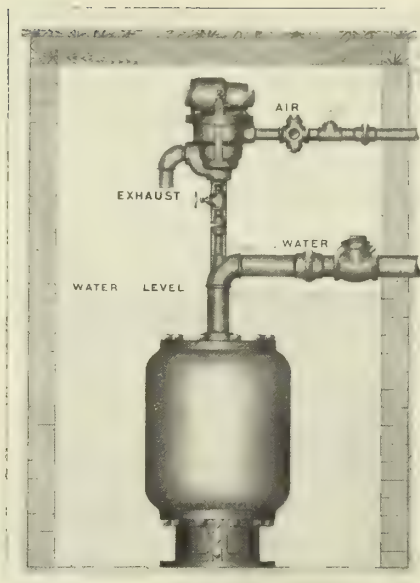
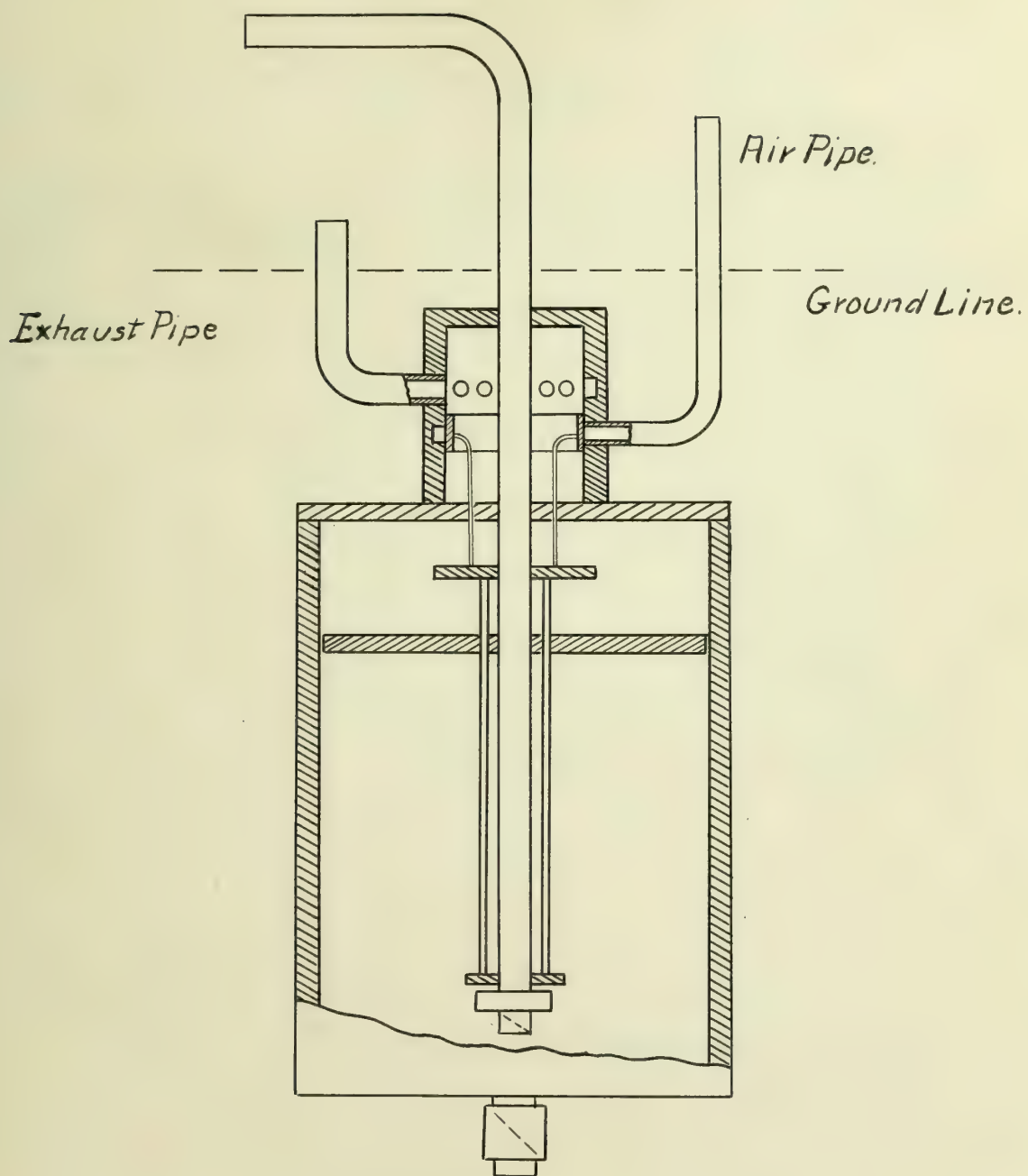


Figure 2.

*Merrill Single Acting Displacement
Pump.*

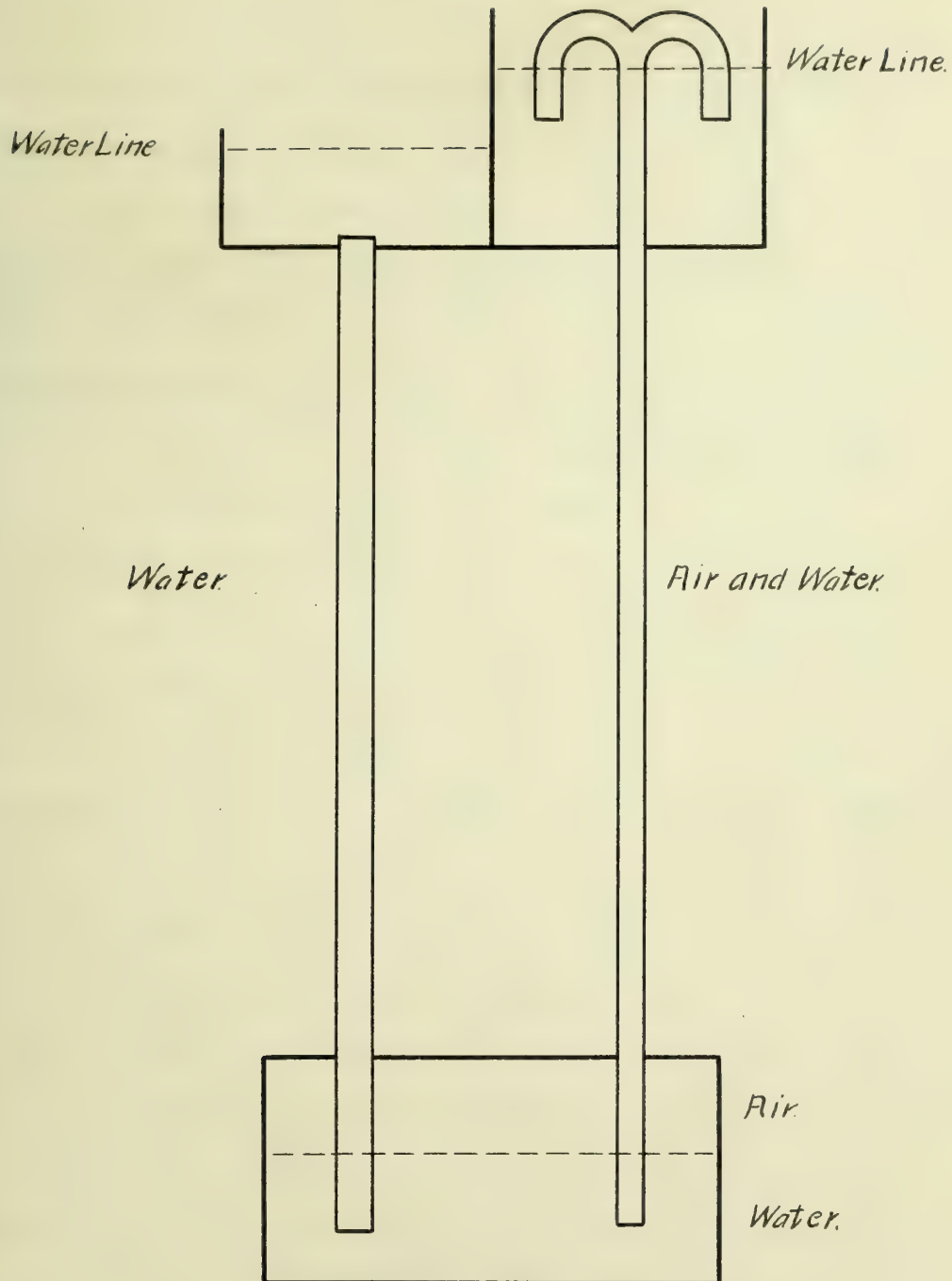


Elliot Displacement Pump.

... by falling water and rising water by ...

... by falling water.

... by the ... first it-
... by Mr. Joseph P. Frizell about 1870. He described this
... of air the water was caused to pass down a vertical pas-
... As the foot of the fall the direction was changed to hori-
... then to the vertical again and carried to such a height
... give the required compression. Placed between the verti-
... and on the upper side of the horizontal ...
... in which the air was collected, as it escaped from the
... Mr. Frizell's first ... this was rather
... For vertical passages tubes $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter were
... The difference in level between the upper openings of the
... was about 10 inches and the height of the ...
... 2 and 3 feet. The efficiency of the apparatus was esti-
... to be about 5 per cent. A larger apparatus was
... constructed by Mr. Frizell and after being exhibited in Boston,
... was tested at the hydraulic laboratory of the Massachusetts
... of Technology. Plate 10 shows the arrangement of the
...
...
...
... obtained permission, from the government officials
... from the company owning the ...



*Frizell Method of Air Compressing by Means of
a Vertical Column of Water.*

times that of the water. Ascending shaft in the water

depth 115 feet. Head 15 feet. Velocity 1 descending

100 feet per second. The head should be less than that of

precautions in design taken, to avoid loss of head, such as

sharply rounded entrance to the descending shaft.

Friction head is directly proportional to the square of the

velocity, directly as the distance traversed by the water, and in-

versely as the mean radius of the channel. The other losses are

proportional to the square of the velocity.

This gives in the proposed system the following losses

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Head } 1.322 \left\{ \frac{1.6}{(4.49)} \right\}^2 \times 1.322 &= .822 \text{ feet.} \\ .415 \left\{ \frac{1.6}{(4.49)} \right\}^2 &= .141 \text{ "} \end{aligned}$$

Loss in descending the water is 1.000 feet

$$\begin{aligned} 1.000 + .822 + .141 &= 1.963 \text{ feet} \\ 1.963 \times 1.322 &= 2.607 \text{ feet.} \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{1.322}{2.607} = 50.7\%$$

Similarly for a head, corresponding to a pressure of 100 pounds

efficiency would be 81 %.

These experiments and computations tend to show that when

on a large scale an efficient cylinder could be found.

Tests of the Air Lift in Germany.

On March 10th, 1894, and 18th, 1895 published the results of a paper by Professor W. von der Pflüger given in the "Zeitschrift" of the German Society of Engineers.

Tests of the air lift were made. The first were laboratory tests, the object being to find the efficiency of the lift under given conditions; the other tests were made under ordinary working conditions in corn-cultivating plants.

All laboratory comparative tests were made using an oak and a discharge pipe. The corrugations ran clear around the pipe, so that its cross section was everywhere circular, although of variable diameter. The claim was made for this pipe that its corrugated form enabled a greater amount of water to be raised, than was possible, with a smooth pipe, because the corrugations would keep the drops of water from slipping back during the general upward movement of the air and water. The well used was 3.1 inches in diameter and 98.4 feet deep. In this well placed the air and water pipes and a rod for determining the level of the water during the test. Above the well was built a frame 21.2 feet high, in which was placed a tank. From this tank a connection was made to a receiving tank. The two pipes were hung on a tackle, so that the amount of submergence and free lift could be altered. The measurements made it possible to measure the discharge, the free lift and the submergence. The length of the air line from the pump to the lift was about 150 feet. As there were a number of tests in it a manometer was attached to the line just

in order to enable the air pressure to be determined.

The comparative tests first undertaken were carried out (1) with a lift having a discharge pipe 119.75 feet long and corrugations of 2.0 and 3.01 inches in minimum and maximum diameter, (2) with a lift having a smooth discharge pipe 2.76 inches in diameter, and (3) with a lift having a smooth discharge pipe of the same length and 2.07 inches diameter.

Three sets of tests were made with the three lifts which differed in the ratio of the height of the lift to the depth of submergence. Three separate experiments were made in each set, which differed only in the amount of air furnished, the ratio of lift to submergence being kept constant. The amount of air furnished was computed from the number of revolutions of the air piston, and readings taken from the air cylinder, which gave the volumetric efficiency. The results of the tests are given in Table 4. As expected the tests showed that the corrugated pipe was a hindrance rather than an advantage. It is evident that the corrugated pipe offered a greater resistance to the rising mixture of water and air than the smooth pipe, because with the latter the greatest efficiency between the indicated work in the compressor and the work shown by the water raised was 45 per cent, while the corrugated pipe under similar conditions gave but 25.2 per cent. The nozzles used in the two cases were different. With the smooth discharge pipe the nozzle was of course, the four being such that the air was discharged around the entire circumference of the pipe, while in the other case the air was introduced into the discharge pipe by a simple U bend at the bottom of the air pipe, with the nozzle end in the center of the riser. In order to determine

The force of this different construction, in the case of smooth pipe, the brass nozzle was put on the corrugated pipe. It was found that with large air supplies and correspondingly large discharge of water there was no difference, but that with the normal air supply the common nozzle furnished 25 per cent. more water.

After the completion of these experiments a lift was constructed with a discharge pipe 3.1 inches in diameter, a submergence of 10.2 feet and a free lift of 24.6 feet. The brass nozzle was used in these experiments. Table 5 gives the results obtained with this lift.

Table 5.

The Effect of Changing the Volume of Air.

Pressure of Air in Pounds per Square Inch	Volume of Air in Gallons per Minute	Free Lift in Feet	Submergence in Feet	Volume of Air in Cubic Feet per Minute	Volume of Air per Gallon of Water
24	29.06	24.61	49.21	7.6	0.26
25	79.25	"	"	18.6	0.24
26	96.43	"	"	22.2	0.29
27	102.12	"	"	24.1	0.30
28	112.54	"	"	44.3	0.38
29	116.24	"	"	50.6	0.44
30	116.24	"	"	55.2	0.48
31	116.24	"	"	57.1	0.49
32	105.67	"	"	106.0	1.00

Following the laboratory experiments, tests were made at four industrial establishments. The results of these experiments are given in Table 6.

Table 6.

Tests of Air Lifts at Industrial Plants in Germany.

No. of Test	Locality	Sur- face E Feet.	Lift F Feet.	Dis- charge Pipe Inches	Water of Air Pipe Inches	Volume of Air Pipes per Minute	Air Cyl- inder Feet per Min- ute	Vel- oc- ity Pres- sure Pounds per Square Inch	Air Cyl- inder Pres- sure Pounds per Square Inch
22	Alsgau	94.88	42.91	6.30	2.99	556.37	217.6	45.6	27.1
23	"	92.82	44.91	6.30	2.99	741.79	222.5	44.3	24.6
24	"	94.88	42.91	6.30	2.99	722.72	337.9	45.3	41.0
25	"	94.88	42.91	6.30	2.99	798.35	424.0	43.2	31.2
26	Wickau	63.32	44.91	7.56	4.94	1075.22	392.3	30.7	11.0
27	Reuthe	301.84	202.10	2.01	0.92	43.95	22.3	150.3	10.4
28	Walben	63.55	229.63	2.44	1.24	65.24	45.2	176.4	10.1

(The following two columns should be on right of above table)		Efficiency %	Velocity of Water at Nozzle Feet per Second.
22.3	5.7		
24.2	7.2		
26.1	8.0		
14.2	2.2		
21.6	4.3		
20.0	4.3		

Note.— In the above table the ratio of surface area of air cylinder : 1, in the others 2 : 2. The efficiency is the ratio between the work done in the air cylinder of the compressor and in raising the water. The efficiency of the Glogau compressor ranged from 14.2% in test 23 to 26.1% ; in test 26.—(Probably mechanical efficiency).

A comparison of tests 11 and 27 in which the lifts and discharges were approximately alike and only the efficiencies were different, being 89.7 and 107.2 gallons a minute respectively, shows that the amount of air needed to raise each gallon of water and the efficiency were in close conformity. It may be therefore assumed that with all capacities and all lifts between 15 and 50 feet, the volume of free air needed will be two or three times the volume of water raised.

This is also shown by tests 23 and 24. The difference in efficiency may be attributed to the different relative submergence. While the lifts of Zwicker and Glogau are nearly the same the depths of submergence differ by about 25 feet, and because the greater depth calls for higher air pressure and hence more work of the compressor without the corresponding increase in the discharge of the lift, it is at once apparent that this is the cause of the smaller efficiency at Glogau. From these tests the ratio of submergence to lift is seen to be between 1 : 1 and 2 : 1. With increasing lifts the air consumption rises and the efficiency falls.

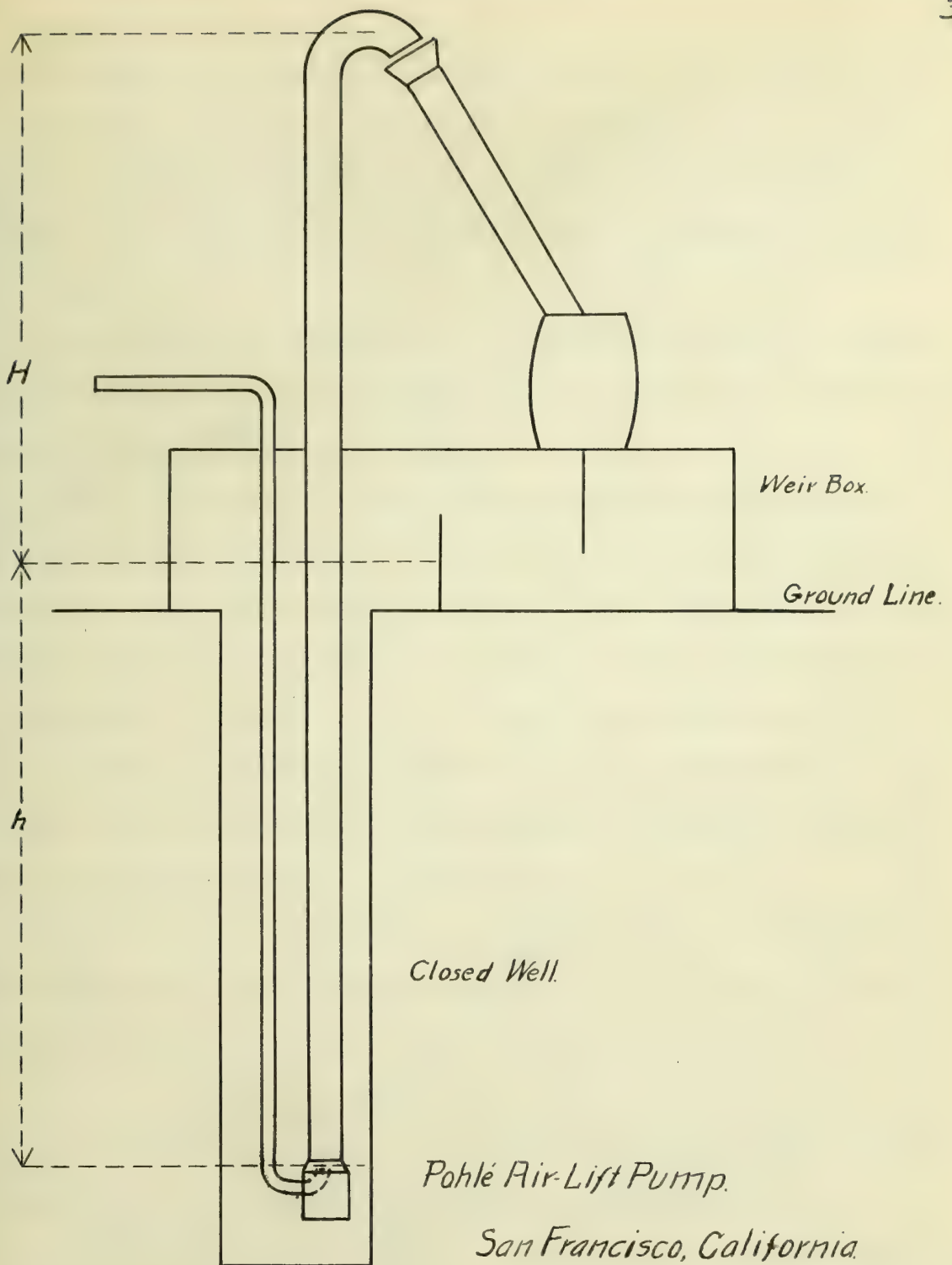
From plotted curves of the laboratory tests it was shown, that the efficiency of the apparatus at first increased to a maximum with an increase of the air supply and then fell off when still more air was furnished. It was also shown by a curve that the maximum discharge was reached when the quantity supplied was small compared with its total capacity. With a discharge of 20 or more than 100 gallons a minute the air supply depended strongly on the quantity of water raised.

The best economy or the highest ratio between the work done in

THE AIR LIFT OF 1905 IN CALIFORNIA.

This lift is the most extensive ever made in the country. An exhibit of the air lift was made at the Alameda California Fair, 1905. At the request of Mr. John H. Prof. Randall of San Francisco made a careful investigation of the theory and practical value of the pump. His reports being favorable an experimental lift was set up in San Francisco. The tests were made by Prof. Randall, who was aided by Messrs Ross E. Brown and Hans C. Berg. In 1906 Mr. Brown read a paper before "The Technical Society of the Pacific Coast" giving the results of the tests. A little later Prof. Randall read a paper before the same society giving a mathematical discussion of the lift. On account of its length this paper was not published in the society's proceedings.

The 75 percent of the apparatus used in the test is shown in plate 11. The diameter of the discharge pipe was 3 inches; of the air pipe 0.9 inches; and of the air nozzle $5/8$ inches. The air pipe had four sharp bends, and a length of 35 feet plus the length of the nozzle. The water was pumped from a closed pipe well 45 feet deep and 10 inches in diameter) discharged into a tank and discharged over a quadrant weir back to the well. The air pipe was arranged that it could be raised and lowered, thus giving different ratios of lift to submersion. The regard was not paid to the best proportion, and it is probable that the efficiency could have been increased by a few slight alterations. The air pipe should not have been reduced at the discharge end as the resistance necessitated a greater pressure in the receiver than would otherwise be required.



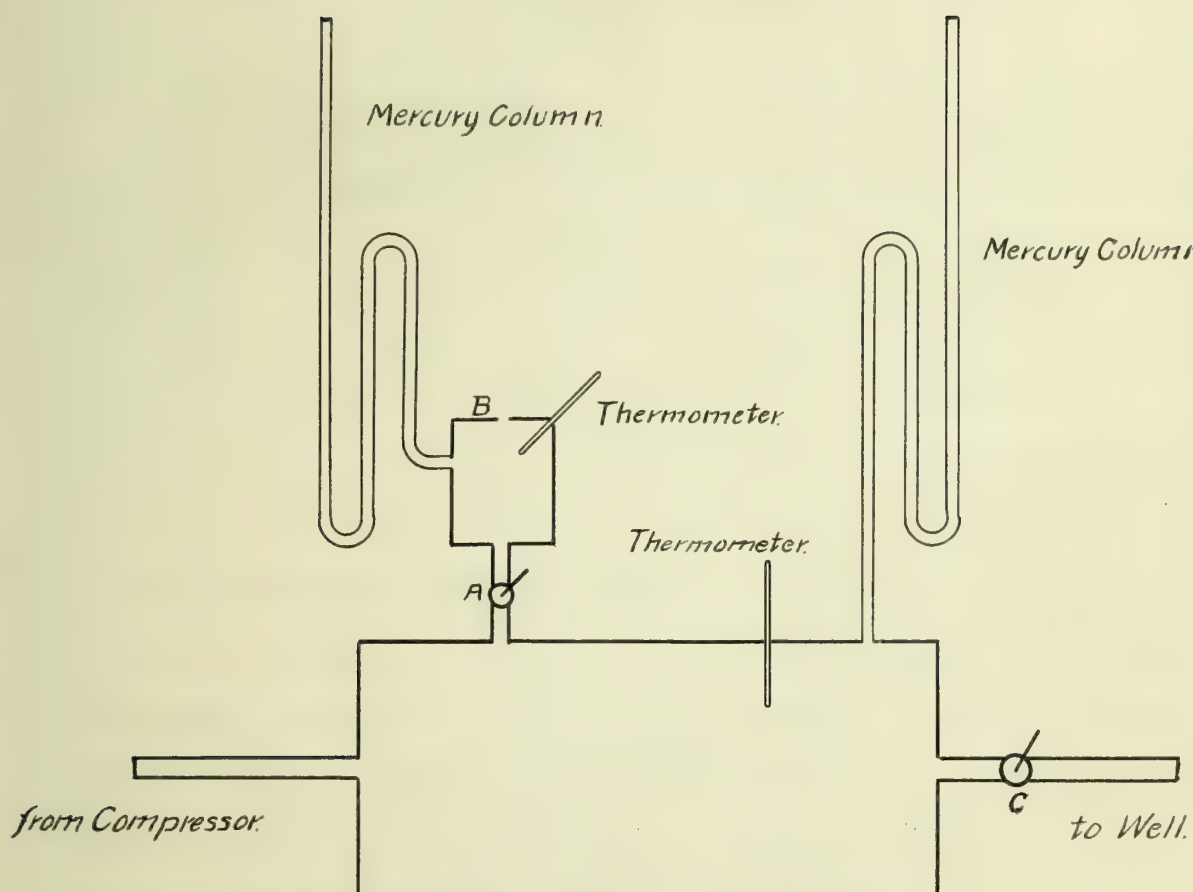


On the basis of calculating the number of pounds of air delivered, per cubic foot, of the atmosphere, to the receiver at any receiver pressure. An average of the results of the tests was adopted. Table 3 gives the values obtained.

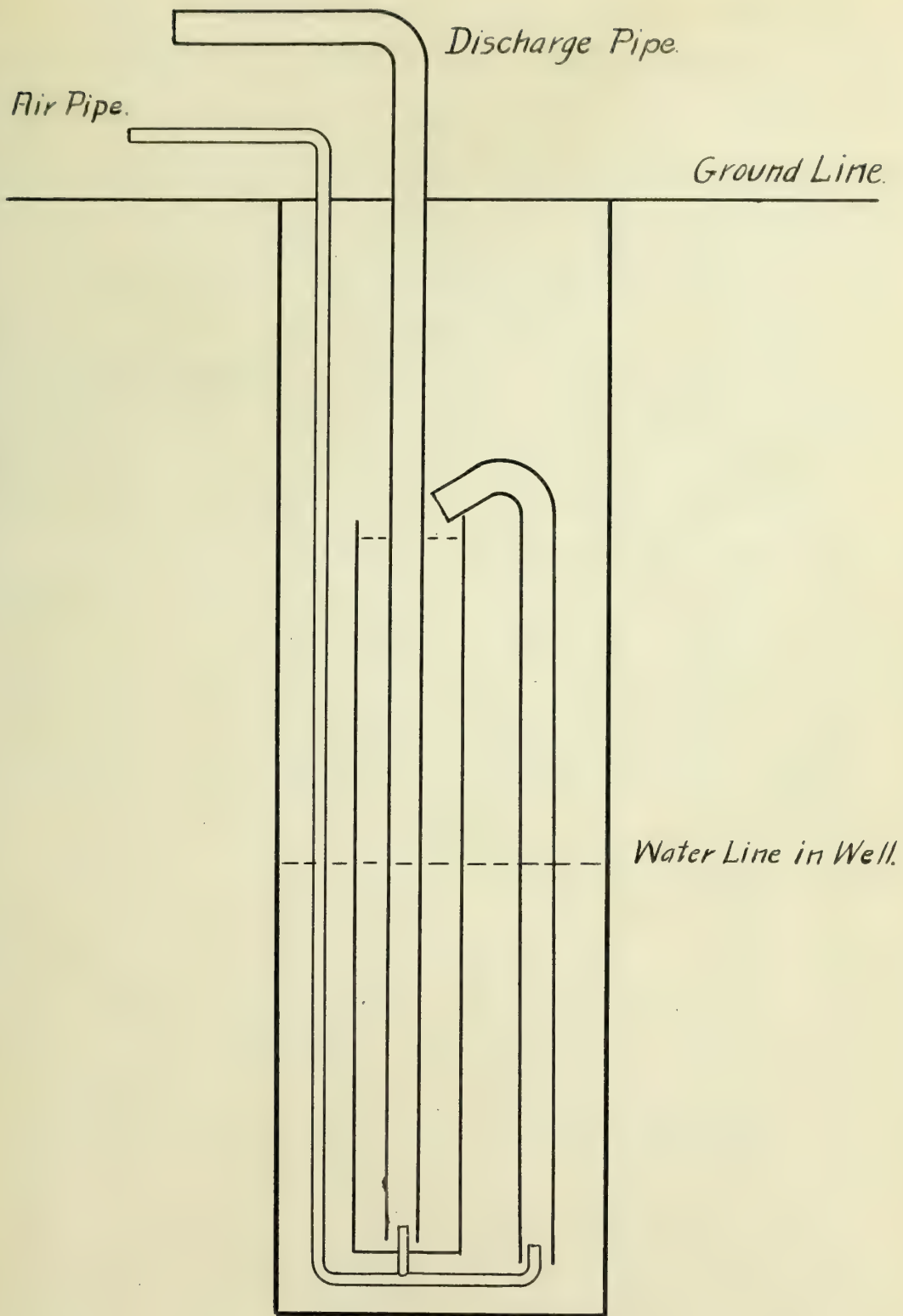
Table 3.

	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Pounds of air delivered per cubic foot of compressor	1.04	1.05	1.06	1.07	1.08	1.09	1.10	1.11	1.12

Second Method. A small auxiliary chamber B, was used for the test. See Plate 12. Compressed air entered this chamber escaped into the atmosphere through a carefully polished circular orifice in this plate. After a pump test had been completed, the compressor was kept running, cock C, was closed and cock A, was opened and adjusted until the conditions of the pump test, regarding number of strokes of compressor per minute and the pressure in the receiver were repeated and maintained. The pressures and temperatures of the compressed air in chamber B, and of the atmosphere, furnished the data upon which to make a calculation of the quantity of air escaping from the orifice. This quantity was evidently the same as that supplied in the pump test, and tests were made from time to time and compared to check the values taken from Table 3. A few of the values are given in Table 4. The diameter of the orifice was 2.91



*Apparatus for Measuring the Quantity of Air Delivered
by the Compressor.*



Method of Using More Than One Lift in Deep Wells.

It was shown that a relation exists between the efficiencies in the use of compressed air to pump water, and in the reverse case, that water can lift air by water. In both cases it is shown that the efficiency is greatest when the work is done on a large scale. It was calculated by Mr. Brown after their tests in California that the efficiency of the experimental lift, an efficiency of over 70% could be obtained. A conclusion, quite similar, was reached by Mr. Russell from computations obtained after his tests on air compressing had been made at St. Anthony Falls, Minnesota.

From the California and the German experiments show that the efficiency is greatest when the ratio of lift to depth of water is about 1 : 1. They also show that the air pressure should be at least equal to the pressure due to the height lifted, and that too great a volume of air delivered decreases the efficiency.

... number of revolutions of the compressor. Normal results point to increase in the amount of air not being so materially increase the efficiency of the system.

Revolutions per minute -----	180	200	220
Air pressure (pounds) -----	40	45	50
Flow (gallons per minute) ---	516	518	489

The pipes were for most thirty feet long and were not materially increasing the flow except at high speeds.

The pipe was next used for 100 feet long and was not materially increasing the flow. Next, 200 feet was used and the result was the flow to 804 gallons, with 30 revolutions and air pressure 40 pounds. Next 300 feet was used with a flow of 804 gallons. Next 400 feet was used with a flow of 804 gallons. Next 500 feet of 2-inch pipe was used, 150 feet apart. With 180 revolutions and 40 pounds air pressure the same results as before were obtained, namely 516 gallons per minute; with 200 revolutions and 40 pounds air pressure, 518 gallons were obtained; 220 feet of six pipe was next tried and the best result produced was 869 gallons. The pipe was shortened to 215 feet and with 180 revolutions and 40 pounds air pressure 869 gallons was produced.

This was the company calling the "Little Air Lift" system. Then it was agreed with the City to put in a pump, (vertical), to be used for the purpose of drawing water from the dam at Roberts Wells, and to be used for the purpose of drawing water from the surface of the ground. The pump was being six feet below the surface. The final test was made on June 1st, 1906. The test showed about 1,500,000 gal-

THE AIR LIFT OF THE CHAMPAIGN AND URBANA WATER WORKS,
AT URBANA, ILLINOIS.

JOHN L. LEE, JR., CHIEF ENGINEER, 1905.

The subject of the air lift was first taken up at the Chicago Exposition, where some laboratory tests comparing different kinds of pumps and different methods of piping could be made. When the tests had been made, it was determined that the place and suitable apparatus for such work. A test of the air lift at the Champaign & Urbana Water Works Pumping Station was then arranged for and made. The plant is located in the north-west corner of Urbana on the north side of the Big Four Railway. The water is raised from wells about 165 feet deep, into a reservoir of 250,000 gallons capacity and from there pumped into the city mains. The average daily requirement at present is about 1,000,000 gallons of water per twenty four hours.

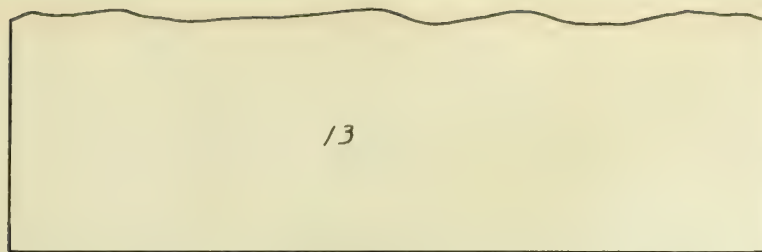
Two years ago the water supply was not equal to the demand, so additional wells were drilled, and four of them connected with an air compressor which was then installed. Within the last year or so it has been found necessary to again increase the capacity of the plant. This time geared, electrically driven deep well pumps are to be substituted for the air lift wells, and also for part of the steam deep well pumps that are now in use.

At the time the test was made there were in operation two pressure pumps, one a "Worthington" & the other a "Jordan and Maxwell"; one double acting deep well pump, two "Cock" deep well pumps and three air wells. Two "Cock" pumps had been disconnected the week before.

Fig. 14 shows the location of the air compressor, receiver, air wells and reservoir. The manner of piping at the wells is shown

30

04

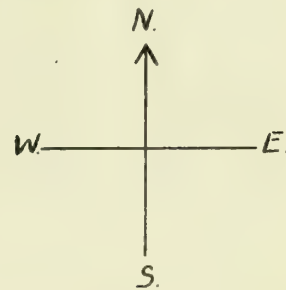


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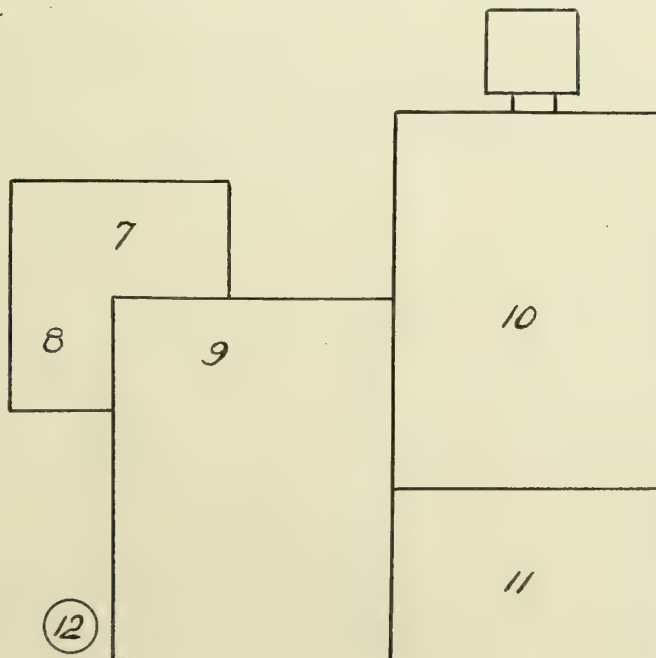
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01

- 1 Air Well
- 2 " "
- 3 " "
- 4 Downie Deep Well Pump.
- 5 Cook Deep Well Pump.
- 6 " " " "
- 7 Air Compressor.
- 8 Gordon and Maxwell Pressure Pump.
- 9 Worthington Pressure Pump.
- 10 Boilers
- 11 Coal.
- 12 Air Receiver.
- 13 Reservoir.



06



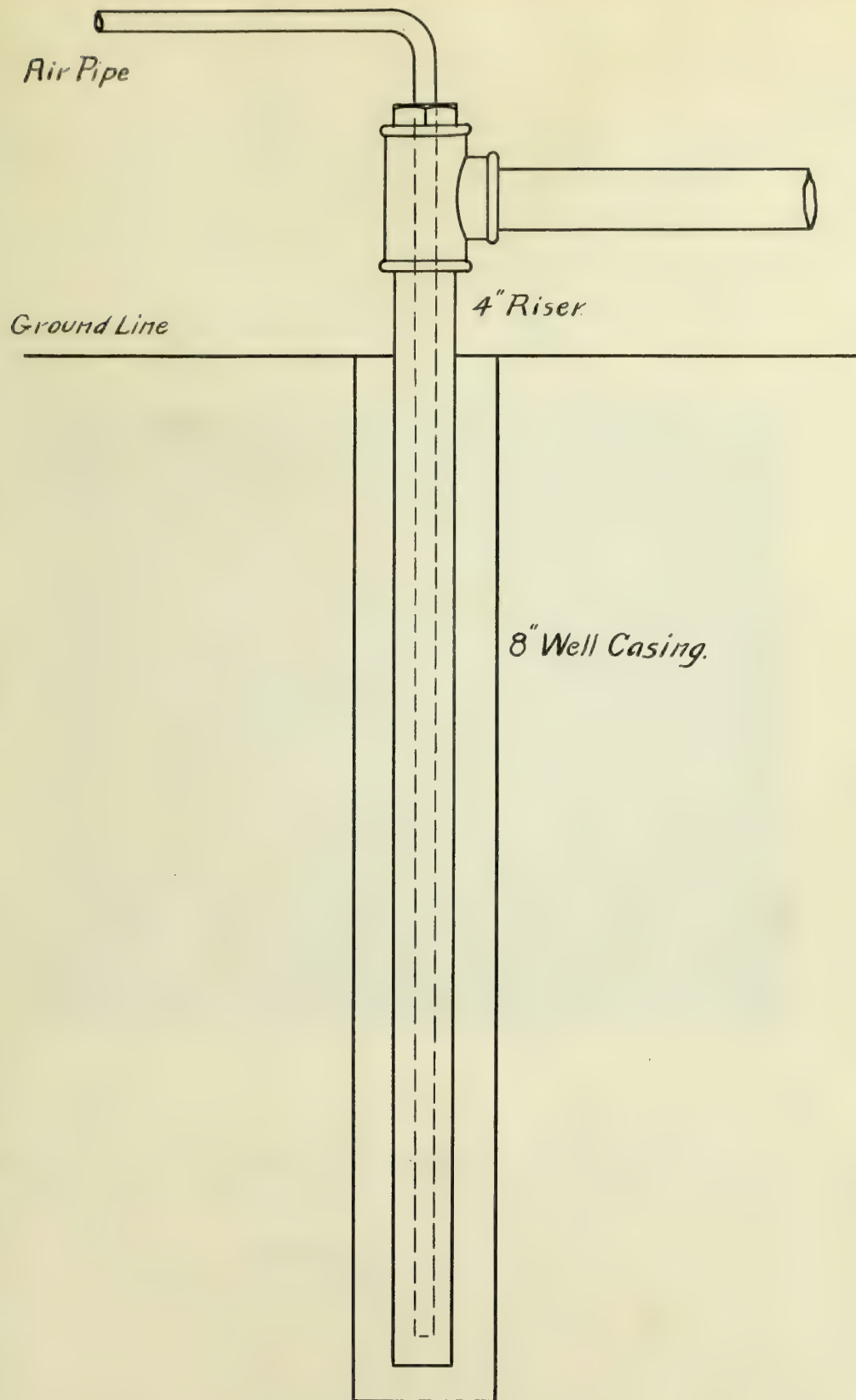
In Figure 10. All of the air wells had an 8 inch casing in which was placed a 4 inch vertical riser with an air pipe 1-1/2 inches in diameter inside of it. Well number 8, which gave the best results, was connected to discharge into a measuring tank for a jet pump. Figure 11 gives a photograph showing the measuring tank, and the connection to it from this well. An air gauge was placed on the line about 10 feet from well number 8.

Several tests were made at this point. Previous to the first test some readings were taken in order to learn the general character of the well. Table 12 gives the readings and results. In all of the air well tests a small pipe was used in the measuring tank.

Table 12.

Readings Taken at Air Well Number 8, to learn the character for different Air Pressures and Speeds of the Compressor.

Conditions:	Air Pressure	Water	Water
at Well	at Well	at Well	at Well
in Pounds	in Pounds	in Pounds	in Pounds
	34	.08	59.14
	35	.70	11.83
	36	.08	13.13
	37	.08	12.57
	38	.08	74.41
	39	.08	11.11
	40	.08	71.57
	41.5	.08	72.09
	42.5	.08	72.09



Air Well Piping at the Urbana Water Works.



Measuring Tank for Jet Meter, at Pumping Station.

Urbana, Illinois.

the readings agree in every way with the facts.

A test was made with the air supply shut off from the well casing, and the compressor, at which the measuring device was in use. In this test the amount of water raised, different air pressures and different air volumes was found. Ten cards were taken from both the float and the compressor. In the recent test all of the cards were in the well cards taken from the compressor so that the work done it was working under normal conditions, could be determined.

A test was made March 31st, 1900. Additional mention is made of the well used in order to reach the measurement. This made the distance from the well to be raised 10 feet and the depth of submersion about 5 feet. These figures were obtained when the well was not in operation. It was intended to measure the depth to the water level in the well, for the discharge. This was attempted but had to be given up for the reason, that the discharge pipe did not hang at a distance from the well casing, and in measuring the distance to the water level the float used was caught between the pipes and those from the string so that it was fastened. The test was made in running the compressor at different speeds and noting the pressure at the well, the amount of discharge and at the same time taking indicator cards from the compressor. Over this was the free air per minute, and the gallons of water per minute. Table 12 gives the results of this test.

It was intended to find the efficiency of the lift for different volumes of air used and different discharges of water.

the difference in this case is the weight of water raised times the distance it is raised, divided by the weight of the air compressors of the compressor. As the water level in the well could not be found for the different discharges that could not be done.

Table 13.

Discharge of Air Well Number 2 with different Air Pressures and Gauges.

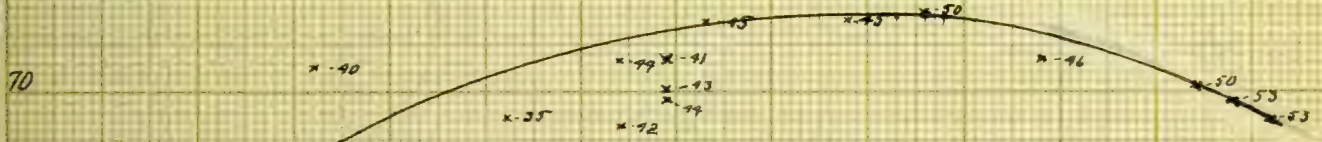
Air Gauge (Air Pressure)	Flow Rate (Gallons per minute)	Water Raised (Feet)	Weight of Water (Pounds)	Weight of Air (Pounds)	Ratio (Water/Air)
15	1.5	10	150	10	15
20	2.0	15	200	15	20
25	2.5	20	250	20	25
30	3.0	25	300	25	30
35	3.5	30	350	30	35
40	4.0	35	400	35	40
45	4.5	40	450	40	45
50	5.0	45	500	45	50
55	5.5	50	550	50	55
60	6.0	55	600	55	60
65	6.5	60	650	60	65
70	7.0	65	700	65	70
75	7.5	70	750	70	75
80	8.0	75	800	75	80
85	8.5	80	850	80	85
90	9.0	85	900	85	90
95	9.5	90	950	90	95
100	10.0	95	1000	100	100

Note.-- The air gauge readings at the compressor are five pounds above the actual pressure. Plot of table given on page 15-17.

It is probable that the water level would fall some for a heavy discharge. At the same time it seems reasonable to consider that the largest discharge of the air wells did not lower the level of the water.

Plot of Values Given in Table 12.

80. Water Raised.
Gallons per
Minute.



Figures by the points of the curve give the corrected
air pressure at the compressor.

Revolutions per Minute of Compressor.

compression is greater than one, the efficiency being 40%. Again, the amount of free air used per gallon of water is extremely large. This also is due partly to the increased water mentioned above. Then the compressor is altogether too large for one well, that is, gives too great a discharge of air, the efficiency was probably decreased a great deal by this fact.

Test Number 2, April 2nd, 1903.

The second test was an efficiency test of the compressor working under normal conditions, raising all three of the wells. The general dimensions of the compressor and the results of the test are given below.

Builder's Name: Stilwell - Pierce & Smith-

Wells Co., Dayton, Ohio.

Number of steam cylinder, high pressure 12 inches.

" " " " low " " "

" " " " " " " "

Weight of water 100 lbs.

Weight of steam 10 lbs.

" " " " " " " "

" " " " " " " "

" " " " " " " "

" " " " " " " "

" " " " " " " "

" " " " " " " "

Weight of water 100 lbs. 3000 pounds.

The expansion valve is used on the steam cylinder and an or-

ifice in the valve on the low pressure cylinder.



*Air Compressor
at Pumping Station Urbana, Ill.*

Plate 17.

Fig. 11 gives the mean effective pressure for the high and low air cylinders. The mean effective pressure is calculated from the diagram, by dividing the area of each card by the length of the card and multiplying by the scale of the

Fig. 12 gives the indicated horse power for the high and low steam cylinders, and 40 on the low cylinder instrument. Fig. 13 and 14 give a set of

Fig. 15, air cylinders. There is quite a large drop in pressure between the high and low pressure steam cylinders. The distribution between the high and low pressure cylinders is such that the high pressure cylinder does twice as much work as the low cylinder.

Fig. 16 gives the Indicated Horse Power for the high and low air cylinders and also the ratio between the total air and steam horse powers. This last result is the mechanical efficiency of the engine.

Other Quantities.

1. Description of test
2. Work revolutions of compressor
3. Total feet of free air displaced
4. Total steam consumption, (Feed water to the boiler) pounds.
5. Water used in jackets of air cylinder

Summary Quantities.

1. Indicated horse power of air cylinders
2. Indicated horse power of steam cylinders.
3. Total indicated horse power (indicated)
4. Total indicated horse power of cylinders
5. Mechanical efficiency by ratio of indicated

TABLE 14.
Mean Effective Pressures.

Number.	R. P. M.	Air Press- ure at Com- press- or. Pounds.	Steam Press- ure. Pounds.	Steam Cylinders.				Air Cylinders.			
				High Pressure.		Low Pressure.		North		South.	
				Head.	Crank.	Head.	Crank.	Head.	Crank.	Head.	Crank.
1	31	40	70	47.95	47.00	8.52	7.28			20.36	19.88
2	32	45	70	47.95	46.85	9.79	9.04	22.64	21.72	21.28	18.96
3	64	50	85	50.00	48.00	11.04	10.78	25.60	24.76	25.20	21.04
4	65	50	85	50.50	48.80	10.92	10.87	25.40	24.16	24.52	20.76
5	66	48	82	49.70	47.35	10.40	10.40	25.44	24.16	24.80	23.20
6	66	50	84	50.50	46.90	10.60	10.00	25.48	24.20	26.00	23.44
7	62	50	83	51.90	49.65	10.40	9.80	24.96	23.60	24.12	20.28
8	46	45	77	50.00	48.45	9.20	8.80	24.96	23.40	23.96	20.84
9	51	45	78	50.00	48.30	9.60	9.00	25.00	23.40	24.12	21.08
10	58	48	83	50.50	48.45	10.56	10.15	24.64	24.56	24.64	24.00
11	52	45	80	50.00	48.25	10.32	9.60	25.36	24.16	23.96	21.76
12	57	48	83	50.00	48.95	10.78	9.72	26.08	24.52	25.12	23.16
13	56	48	82	49.50	49.50	9.84	9.60	25.36	24.16	24.60	21.76
14	57	48	82	49.65	47.50	10.80	9.51	25.52	24.08	24.88	23.16
15	50	45	80	49.45	48.00	10.30	9.60	24.00	22.40	24.68	21.88
16	53	46	81	48.75	48.50	10.80	9.60	25.60	22.56	24.64	21.88
17	52	45	80	49.44	47.50	11.06	10.00	25.20	24.40	24.92	21.88

Form D-2-10-98-5 M-W.

M. E. LABORATORY U. OF I.

SCALE *50*

SIZE CYL *12" x 18"*

ENGINE.....

TIME OR NO. *7*

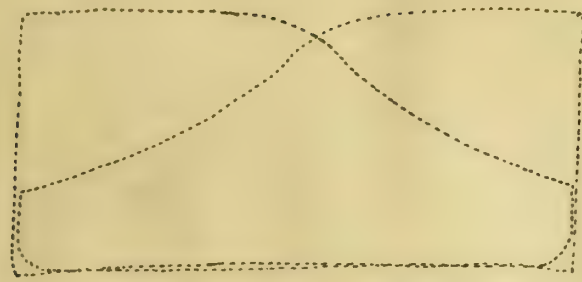
BOILER PRES.....

DATE.....

END.....

R. P. M.....

VAC. GAUGE.....



NOTE: TAKE DIAGRAM ON THIS SIDE OF PAPER

Head

High Pressure.

Crank.

Form D-2-4-97-5 M-W.

M. E. LABORATORY U. OF I.

SCALE *20*

SIZE CYL *18" x 18"*

ENGINE.....

TIME OR NO. *7*

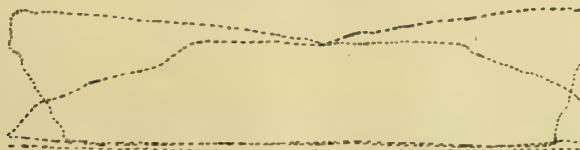
BOILER PRES.....

DATE.....

END.....

R. P. M.....

VAC. GAUGE.....



NOTE: TAKE DIAGRAM ON THIS SIDE OF PAPER.

Low Pressure.

Steam Cards.



Form D-2-10-98-5 M-W.

M. E. LABORATORY U. OF I.

SCALE *40*

SIZE CYL. *14" x 18"*

ENGINE..

TIME OR NO. *7*

BOILER PRES.

DATE

END

R. P. M.

VAC. GAUGE



NOTE: TAKE DIAGRAM ON THIS SIDE OF PAPER

Head.

North Cylinder.

Crank.

Form D-2-4-97-5 M-W.

M. E. LABORATORY U. OF I.

SCALE *40*

SIZE CYL. *14" x 18"*

ENGINE..... TIME OR NO. *7*

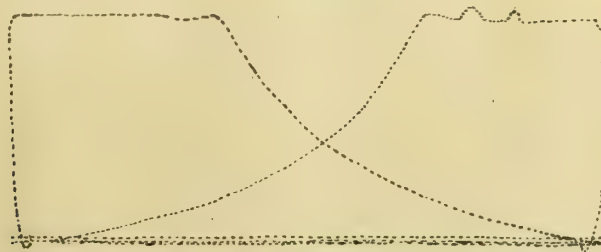
BOILER PRES.

DATE

END

R. P. M.

VAC. GAUGE



NOTE: TAKE DIAGRAM ON THIS SIDE OF PAPER.

South Cylinder.

Air Cards.

TABLE 15.
Horse Powers.

Num- ber.	Steam Cylinders.				Air Cylinders.				Total		Effi- ciency %
	High Pressure.		Low Pressure.		North		South.		Steam	Air	
	Head	Crank	Head	Crank	Head	Crank	Head	Crank			
1	7.43	7.28	3.01	2.58			4.41	4.31	20.30	17.44	85.90
2	7.42	7.26	3.45	3.19	4.86	4.60	4.67	4.02	21.32	18.15	85.12
3	16.25	15.60	8.18	7.99	11.57	10.95	11.39	9.32	49.02	43.23	90.02
4	16.41	15.86	8.09	8.04	11.57	10.99	11.15	9.44	48.40	43.15	89.10
5	16.40	15.62	7.85	7.85	11.67	10.87	11.37	10.54	47.72	44.45	91.68
6	16.67	15.51	8.00	7.55	11.93	10.54	11.69	9.89	47.73	44.05	90.02
7	15.57	14.90	7.30	6.93	10.76	9.98	10.36	8.57	44.79	39.67	84.05
8	11.50	11.14	4.82	4.62	7.91	7.50	6.58	6.52	32.08	28.61	89.21
9	12.75	12.32	5.78	5.24	8.85	8.14	8.53	7.33	36.09	32.85	91.02
10	14.64	14.05	6.87	6.02	9.72	9.52	9.89	9.50	41.58	38.63	93.14
11	13.00	12.55	6.12	5.51	9.18	8.58	8.66	7.72	37.18	34.14	91.82
12	14.25	13.95	7.00	6.32	10.34	9.48	9.99	8.96	41.52	38.77	93.30
13	13.86	13.86	6.29	6.12	9.86	9.18	9.54	8.26	40.13	36.84	91.82
14	14.15	13.84	7.02	6.48	10.01	9.30	9.50	8.96	41.19	37.77	91.64
15	12.36	12.00	5.92	5.47	8.33	7.62	8.38	7.44	35.75	31.77	88.87
16	12.90	12.85	6.52	5.80	9.42	8.16	9.06	7.93	37.87	34.57	91.52
17	12.85	12.35	6.56	5.93	9.10	8.68	8.99	7.77	37.69	34.54	91.64
Average									38.84	35.21	90.63

10. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (absolute) _____

11. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (gauge) _____

12. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (vacuum) _____

13. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

14. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

15. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

16. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

17. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

18. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

19. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

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37. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

38. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

39. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

40. Theoretical steam pressure, lbs. per sq. in. (total) _____

water can flow out away, so that the air pressure at the well is very close to the same, on account of the loss through friction in the pipe. Number two threw the most water, number three the next, and number one least and number one less than number three. It has been estimated that under ordinary conditions numbers one and three will throw not more than one and one half times as much water as number two, probably less than this amount. During the test of 24 hours number two raised 16,593.4 gallons of water or 691.4 gallons per day. At the rate given above the three wells would raise 248,963.5 gallons per twenty four hours. This is 267.1 gallons of water raised per H.P. per hour, or 53.5 pounds of water raised per pound of steam. This is no better than the results obtained from some "cock" deep well pump works, made in this country.

From the results obtained it will be seen that the air lift at present is not the choice of the advocates of this method of pumping. This is due partly to the fact that the water is not so pure, and also to the fact that the wells are not adapted to the successful operation of the system. The chief reason for this is that the depth of the water in the wells is not very great enough for the height the water has to be lifted.

134 : 135 A New Method of Compressing Air.
(51.24.) J. P. Fricell.
September 1877.

136 : 145 Experiments on the Compression of Air by the
Direct Action of Water.
November 1880. (119. 46. 24.) J. P. Fricell.

146 : The Air Lift Pump.
(3p. 3d. 14.)
Historical. Also results of tests made by
Prof. P. W. Randall at Alameda, California.

Pohle's Air Lift.
(1/2p. 3d.)
Notice of paper by R.E. Brown and Hans Behr.
Page 44

Dr. Pohle's Air Lift Pump.
(6p. 31. 2d. 41.) R. E. Brown
H. C. Behr.

147 :
January 1881.

Pohle's Air Lift.
(1/2p.)
148 : 149

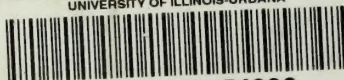
- J. E. L. The Theory of the Air Lift Pump.
(20p. 2d. 11.) Prof. E. G. Harris.
1897-1898
- T. A. L. S. Pohl's Air Lift Pump.
(1-1/2p. 41.) C. A. Stetefeldt.
48 : 566
18 Dec. 1892.
- T. A. L. S. The Air Lift Pump.
(1p. 5c) C. A. Stetefeldt.
49 : 483
18 Dec. 1892.
- T. A. L. S. The Air Lift.
(2p. 2d. 31.) Translation of paper by
Prof. F. Josse in the
"Zeitschrift".
(1p. 5c)
18 : 487
18 Oct. 1892.
- T. A. L. S. The Air Lift Pump.
(8p. 31. 3d.) C. C. Atwood.
11 : 32
Jan. 1890
Report of test at Rockford, Ill.
- T. A. L. S. The New Rockford Pumping Plant.
(1-1/2p. 21. 3d.)
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18 Dec. 1892
Deep well pumps substituted for air lift.
- T. A. L. S. Raising Water by the Air Lift.
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- T. A. L. S. Raising Water by the Air Lift.
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18 Dec. 1892
Plants at Rockford and Joliet, Ill.
- T. A. L. S. A Test of the Pohl's Air Lift Pump
at De Kalb, Illinois.
(2/2p. 2d.) J. B. Merriam.
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18 Dec. 1892.
- T. A. L. S. Air Compressor, Dixon, Ill.,
Water Works.
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- T. A. L. S. Water Works at Dixon, Illinois.
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Air lift used.
- T. A. L. S. The Air Lift Pump.
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Plants at Rockford and Joliet, Ill.
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- C. A. Improved Pneumatic Displacement Pumps.
 4 : 598 (2-1/2p. 4i.)
 March '99 Merrill Pneumatic Pump.
- E. R. A Compressed Air Pumping Plant.
 29 : 395 (1-1/2p. 2d.)
 19 May '94. A mine at Plymouth, Pa. in which
 ordinary steam pumps are run by
 compressed air.
- A. M. Pumping or Raising Water by
 19 : 472 Compressed Air.
 7 May '96. (1p.) Frank Richards.
- E. & M. J. Compressed Air for Pumping.
 59 : 314 (1p.) Frank Richards.
 6 April '95. Protest against using compressed
 air to run poor pumps.
- C. A. Driving Pump by Compressed Air.
 3 : 530 (6p. 6t.) William Cox.
 Feb. '99. Gives formulae for finding amount of air
 required to raise a given amount of water
 when using direct acting pumps.





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